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ESTONIA

ASSEMBLY OF CAPTIVE EUROPEAN NATIONS



This is volume 4 in a series of nine booklets. The Assembly of Captive European Nations undertook the publication of the series in response to numerous demands. Also, since much of the existing literature on East-Central Europe has been written from the outsider's point of view, there seems to be a need for informative material bearing the stamp of authenticity and first hand experience. Each booklet has been prepared by experts of the respective National Committee.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ESTONIA

by

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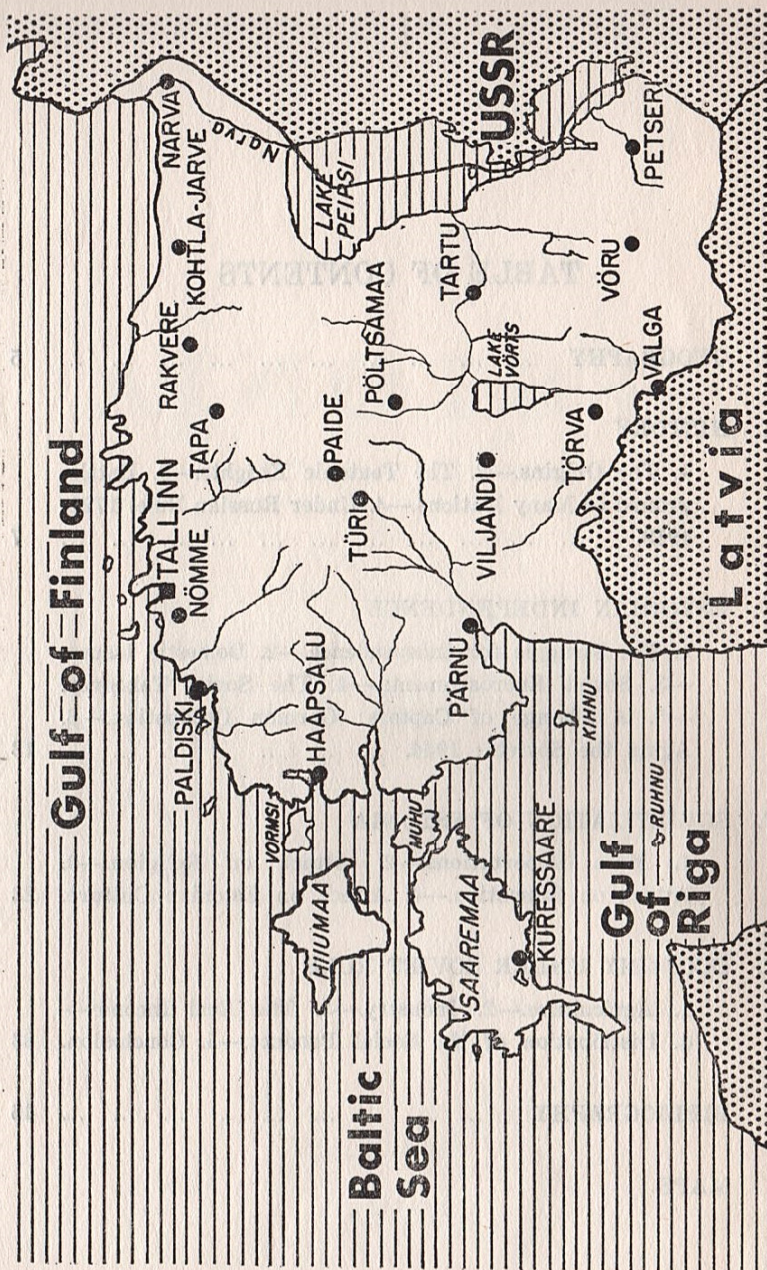
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. GEOGRAPHY	5
II. HISTORY	
1. The Origins.—2. The Teutonic Knights.—3. Battle-ground of Many Nations.—4. Under Russian Rule, 1721-1918.	7
III. ESTONIAN INDEPENDENCE	
1. The Struggle for Independence.—2. Domestic Issues.—3. Soviet Encroachments.—4. The Soviet Takeover.—5. A Change of Captors: German Occupation.—6. Again the Soviets: 1944.	13
IV. SOVIETIZATION OF ESTONIA	
1. Mass Deportations.—2. Attack on Religion.—3. Attack on Education.—4. Attack on Estonian Culture.	23
V. ECONOMY UNDER SOVIET RULE	
1. Agriculture.—2. Industry.—3. The Real Income.—4. Distribution of the Social Product.—5. Conclusion.	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY	46
MAPS	



I.

GEOGRAPHY

ESTONIA, or *Eesti* as it is known in Estonian, is situated on the northeastern Baltic coast between the 57th and 59th parallels and the 23rd and 27th East longitudes. The nation's border is marked on the north by the Gulf of Finland, and on the west by the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga. To the south lies Latvia, while to the east the border runs along Lake Peipsi and the Soviet Union's western boundary.

While small by U.S. standards, Estonia's 18,370 sq. miles, or 47,549 sq. km. (roughly the size of Maryland and Massachusetts combined), make it larger than Denmark, Switzerland, Belgium, or the Netherlands. Part of this area consists of more than 818 islands, the largest of which are Saaremaa, Hiiumaa, and Muhumaa in the Baltic Sea.

Climatically, Estonia lies in the temperate zone. But since it is a relatively flat, open country (the highest elevation, Suur Munamagi Mountain, is only 1,056 ft.), its climate is tempered by the Baltic Sea. Hence, average temperatures in Estonia are considerably higher than those on the same geographic latitude farther to the east. The vegetation in Estonia resembles that of the temperate zone of Europe.

According to the 1959 Soviet census, the population of Estonia numbers 1,197,000. Of this total, about 74 per cent are Estonians, 21 per cent are of Russian origin, and the remaining 5 per cent a mixture of Finns, Ukrainians, *etc.*

The capital city is Tallinn, founded in the early part of the 13th century. Other well-known cities include Tartu, Narva, Pärnu, and Rakvere; all of these, as well as a number of others, date back to the Middle Ages.

Sword) was formed expressly for northern military campaigns. Under the leadership of Bishop Albert, the *Fratres* fought the Estonians for nearly two decades. In 1217, the *Fratres* defeated the Estonians in a hard fought major battle near the town of Viljandi. By 1227 the crusaders had captured all of Estonia.

Despite their constant reinforcements and superior weapons, the crusaders might not have succeeded without aid from unexpected quarters. In 1219, for example, Denmark's King Valdemar II invaded Estonia from the north and was able to establish a bridgehead. On the captured territory Valdemar built the fortified castle "Tallinn"—site of today's capital—from which he conducted further military raids.

Similarly, in the summer of 1220, Sweden launched a campaign on Estonia's northwestern border. The expedition proved to be short-lived, as Estonians from the island of Saaremaa routed the invaders. But the constant invasions from virtually all sides so weakened the defenders that the *Fratres* at last prevailed. The fact that Estonia had no central government to direct and coordinate her defense also contributed to her defeat.

Once the Estonians succumbed, their land was partitioned among the warring factions. The northern area was taken over by Denmark; the southern, by the *Fratres*, who eventually merged with the Order of Teutonic Knights. The remaining area already belonged to various Bishops, notably those of Tartu and Saaremaa-Laanemaa.

In 1346 Denmark transferred its Estonian holdings to the Teutonic Order. With this move, all of Old Livonia, as the Baltic area encompassing Estonia came to be known, legally became part of the Holy Roman Empire. Thereafter, for almost 200 years, this area was controlled by Roman Catholic bishops and the military *Order*.

At the time of the takeover by the crusaders many *maakond* (counties), which had not surrendered unconditionally, made agreements with the conquerors for rights guaranteeing a measure of freedom for Estonian peasants. Thus, even though members of the German *Orders* and Bishops turned large areas of land into personal fiefs, the Estonian peasants' lot did not change appreciably. In 1343, however, the peasants launched a revolt, which was quickly and ruthlessly suppressed. Thereafter the German *Orders* ignored their former "agreements" and the peasants' lot became increasingly harsher.

Peasants reacted to these harsh terms by seeking to change land-lords or by escaping to towns. Towns, unlike their surrounding areas, were autonomous units governed by elected councils (*Rat*) and mayors (*Burgermeister*). Within them artisans and merchants were organized into guilds. The important factor was that within the towns the population, made up not only of Estonians but of Germans as well, was free.

So many peasants escaped into towns that the landed aristocracy became alarmed lest they lose all their workers. As a result, the *Landstag*—a council of elected peers charged with administering the country—declared the peasants *glebae adscripti*, or bound to the land for life. And thus bound to the land, Estonian peasants held this low status until well into the 19th century.

During these early years of Teutonic rule many towns sprang up in Estonia. Except for Narva, all of the major centers belonged to the Hanseatic League, and carried on vigorous trade with the Russian commercial center of Novgorod. Many of these Estonian towns became very wealthy. Some even fortified themselves and became powerful military bastions in their own right.

3. The Battleground of Many Nations

In the 15th century the sway of the Teutonic Order over Old Livonia was challenged. The Protestant reformation was sweeping across Europe. In its wake the power of the Catholic Church in Estonia became weakened. At the same time two aggressive powers bordering the Baltic area—Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian State—were on the rise.

As the power of the Teutonic Order waned, Estonia became the battleground for a long destructive war involving the *Order*, Sweden, Denmark, the Polish-Lithuanian State and Russia. This so-called Livonian War, marked by many changes of luck and partners, lasted for a quarter of a century (1558-1583) and resulted in the total destruction of the Teutonic Order by the Russian army in 1560. By the end of the war, however, Russia was expelled from Estonia and the country remained divided between the three warring states: Sweden, the Polish-Lithuanian State and Denmark. Sweden next engaged the Polish-Lithuanian State and wrested control of southern Estonia (the Altmark Peace Treaty, 1629). Finally, by ousting the Danes from the islands of Saaremaa and Muhu (Peace Treaty of Bromsebro, 1645), Sweden became the undisputed ruler of Estonia.

Yet Sweden's sway over Estonia proved to be short-lived. Russia continued to battle the Swedes and, unable to make headway alone, allied herself with Poland and Denmark. In 1700 this triumvirate launched the military campaign that has since become known as the Great Northern War. The result of that war was the complete destruction of Swedish power in the Baltic by 1721.

The Nystad Treaty, ending that conflict, made Estonia a province of the Russian Empire. At last Russia had won her "window" to the west—but little more. Because of her "scorched earth" methods of waging war the province she acquired was a vast wasteland. As

the Russian general Sheremetyev put it in his report to the Tsar: "There is nothing left to destroy; not a cock crows from Lake Peipus to the Gulf of Riga."

4. Under Russian Rule, 1721-1918

Russian rule wrought few changes in Estonia's social order. The Nystad Treaty between Sweden and Russia allowed the German nobility in Estonia to retain most of its feudal privileges. The nobility was allowed, for example, to retain its government (*Landtag*) and its rights over the peasants.

In fact, as far as the peasants were concerned, things became worse. The few remaining free peasants were evicted from their land and made the property of the large estates, usually owned by German nobility. It was not until the 19th century that these crushing restrictions were lifted. Through a series of laws enacted in Russia, the peasants were freed from serfdom only in 1816-1819.

The latter part of the 19th century saw the emergence of a "national awakening" in Estonia marked by spiritual and cultural ferment and a growing sense of national identity. Although the first Estonian book was published in 1535, it was not until the second half of the 19th century that a strong, distinctly Estonian, literary movement came into its own. The beginning of this movement is marked by the publication of *Kalevipoeg* (Kalev's Son), a rich collection of Estonian folklore compiled by F. R. Kreutzwald. This was soon followed by yet another collection of Estonian folklore published by Pastor Jakob Hurt. These collections were followed by many novels and books of short stories with a clearly nationalistic flavor.

By 1871, when the Estonian Literary Society (*Eesti Kirjameeste Selts*) was formed, a clearly "Estonian" cultural renaissance was in full swing. Newspapers with "pro-Estonian" editorial platforms appeared. Professional and amateur theatre groups were formed across the nation. Music, again with a distinct Estonian flair, was being written and performed. Orchestras, choirs and bands, both amateur and professional, were formed in many communities.

It was during this period that the now traditional Song Festivals were started. Many choirs with thousands of singers from all parts of Estonia would gather, usually at five-year intervals, to give performances and sing together. Often these festivals became exuberant manifestations of Estonian patriotism and self-confidence. The festivals are still being held under the Soviets. Initially the Communists, who viewed the festivals as a bourgeois enterprise, banned them. This decision proved so unpopular that the Soviets had to relent.

Stimulated by the arts, this rising spirit of nationalism soon spread to other areas. Estonians, for instance, began to press the Tsar for greater political freedom and autonomy. Some of these efforts had good results. Estonians won a more active role in governing their country. A less apparent result of such pressure, but one which proved very important later, was that it diminished the long standing power of the Germans in Estonia.

The height of this national ferment was reached during the Russian Revolution of 1905. As in Russia, a rebellion erupted in Estonia. It was brutally crushed by tsarist forces. But despite its failure the revolt in Estonia intensified the feeling of nationalism and the desire for freedom. As a result, a cultural movement called "Young Estonia" was formed. Within it many dedicated young Estonians worked to free their country.

Through the arts and through political pressure, Estonians established a sense of national identity. The uprising of 1905 gave them a foundation of dedication and direction. Estonians waited for the next chance to free their country.

III.

ESTONIAN INDEPENDENCE

IN FEBRUARY of 1917, a revolution erupted in Russia. Tsarist rule collapsed and a liberal provisional government took over. National groups long under tsarist rule, including the Estonians, began to demand autonomy.

Russia's provisional government assented to many of these demands. On March 30, 1917 (April 12, 1917 according to the Gregorian Calendar) it granted autonomy to Estonia. Under the provisions of a law passed by the Russian government, Estonia now had the right to elect a diet (parliament) and to administer her internal affairs. A democratic national election was promptly held in Estonia. The first Estonian diet convened on July 1, 1917.

But the fury of the Russian revolution had not yet subsided. Again guns rang out and again the Russian government toppled. On October 25, 1917 (November 7 according to the Gregorian Calendar) Bolsheviks led by V. I. Lenin seized power. Fighting still continued in various parts of Russia and there was no assurance that the Communist victory was permanent. To minimize his difficulties until the Bolsheviks had complete control in Russia, Lenin proclaimed (November 17, 1917) that his regime recognized the "right of Russia's peoples to free self-determination—including secession and establishment of independent states."

On the surface the statement was all that Estonia could have hoped for. Yet many Estonians questioned the sincerity of the new Russian government. The events that followed speak for themselves—and for the duplicity of the Communists.

1. The Struggle for Independence

In January of 1918, Russo-German peace talks at Brest-Litovsk collapsed. The German army, halted near Riga during the negotia-

tions, resumed its drive into Estonia. Confronted by the impending success of the German advance, the Estonian Diet made two major decisions: (1) proclaimed Estonia an independent state, and (2) appointed a special Rescue Committee to make the Diet's decision public in due course. This the Committee did on February 24, 1918, less than a month after the Diet had voted the decision.

Meanwhile, since the Germans had already occupied Estonia and prohibited the Estonian government to meet, members of the Diet went into hiding. Prime Minister Konstantin Päts, however, was arrested by the German High Command.

By the autumn of 1918 the Allies had succeeded in defeating the German Army in the West. As a result, German troops in Estonia began a retreat. On the heels of the departing Germans, in direct violation of Lenin's proclamation on self-determination, Soviet soldiers surged into Estonia.

For Estonia the situation was desperate. The fledgling Estonian government had had no time to organize any military defense. In fact, it had barely emerged out of hiding from German occupying forces. But the events called for a quick action.

The government's first step was to organize an emergency resistance force to delay the Communist advance. In the meantime, the government hurriedly began building up a regular army. The steps were taken none too soon. By the time the Soviet advance could be halted, nearly two thirds of Estonia was under Communist control and the Soviet outposts were within 17 miles of Tallinn.

At this moment of highest danger, the freshly organized Estonian army embarked upon a vigorous counter-attack to gain the initiative and to expel the enemy from the country. The arrival in Tallinn of 2000 Finnish volunteers to fight side by side with their Estonian kinsmen for the independence of Estonia helped to raise the fighting spirit of the nation. The resistance of the Soviet troops was quickly broken and in less than two months the country was cleared of the aggressor's troops, though the war was to continue a year longer.

Meanwhile, a new enemy emerged in the south and involved Estonia for some time in a two-front war. In Latvia, a part of the German army had organized itself into the so-called "Iron Division" and *Landeswehr*. On the pretext of fighting the Communists they overthrew the elected Latvian government, occupied Riga, and began massing troops along Estonia's boundary. In late May of 1919 the Germans launched an attack on Estonian border positions.

This time, however, the Germans were facing an altogether different Estonia. Seasoned by the campaign against the Communists, the Estonian army was now a powerful force. After fierce battles the Germans were decisively defeated on June 23, 1919 near

the Latvian town of Vonnun. All fighting was ended by an armistice signed on July 3rd of the same year.

Meanwhile, all subsequent Soviet efforts to recapture Estonia, launched from the Soviet Union proper during the German attack, had been repulsed. Finally, after 14 months of war, the Communists ended military aggression by signing a peace treaty with Estonia on February 2, 1920. The terms of that treaty proclaim that the Soviet Union "unreservedly recognizes the independence and autonomy of the State of Estonia, and voluntarily renounces for all times all rights of sovereignty held by Russia over the Estonian people..."

2. Domestic Issues

Even while the War of Liberation—as the battle against the Soviets and Germans came to be known—was still in process, Estonia was already grappling with its non-military problems. Early in 1919 a plebiscite was held and a Constituent Assembly elected. The Assembly had two major problems confronting it. An immediate solution had to be found for the antiquated agrarian system. Also, a permanent Constitution had to be drafted in order that a government structure could be formed.

On October 10, 1919, the Assembly passed a sweeping land reform bill. Large estates of the nobility were expropriated and divided among landless peasants. The former landholders were allowed to keep 50 hectares of land and were compensated for all expropriated holdings. And, on December 20, 1920, a Constitution drafted by the Assembly went into effect.

The first Estonian Constitution was patterned predominantly on that of Switzerland. The Parliament consisted of one chamber of deputies. The functions of the president were merged in the office of prime minister (State Elder) who was responsible to the legislature. The State Elder and his cabinet of ministers had to resign if the Parliament failed to give him a vote of confidence on any issue.

The Constitution further provided all national minorities of 3,000 or more people (Germans, Russians, Jews, and Swedes) with "cultural autonomy." All of these groups were entitled to maintain schools in their native languages, and to use their language in official transactions with governmental offices and courts. The cost of maintaining these "native language" schools was absorbed by the central Estonian government through allocations on a unit basis.

The government structure provided by the Constitution, though adequate as an interim measure, proved much too weak to cope with serious problems. When the world-wide economic crisis of the

1930's hit Estonia, the government was unable to pass legislation strong enough to deal with the mounting problems.

Cabinet after cabinet toppled and soon it became clear that a new government structure was needed.

At the agitation of anti-democratic forces, a new Constitution was adopted in October of 1933. This time the pendulum of power swung the other way. The executive branch was made so much stronger than the legislative that it endangered the democratic processes.

To end the continuing political turmoil which threatened to throw the country into complete chaos the executive branch took radical steps. All political parties were banned, Parliament was recessed, and until 1938 the country was ruled by executive decrees. During this political lull a new National Assembly was elected to re-examine the Constitution and to devise a more balanced form of government. As a result, in 1937 Estonia had its third Constitution in less than twenty years.

The third Constitution called for two legislative chambers. The "first chamber" (*Riigivolikogu*), elected on a popular basis, had 80 delegates. The second chamber (*Riiginoukogu*) had 40 delegates representing municipalities, various trades, cultural establishments, labor, the two largest religious denominations, etc. The executive branch was to be headed by a President of the Republic. National minorities in Estonia retained the privileges they had been granted under the first Constitution.

In accordance with the new Constitution, elections were held and a new parliament convened in April, 1938. Konstantin Päts (previous State Elder) was elected President. For once it appeared that the government structure was sufficiently stabilized. Moreover, the economic situation was improving rapidly, and it seemed that "good years" were just around the corner for Estonia.

Unfortunately expectations of a calm and prosperous future were to be short-lived. The dark clouds of World War II were already gathering on the horizon. And the Soviet Union, the restless giant to the East, was again eyeing this prosperous little country.

3. Soviet Encroachments

By the Tartu Peace Treaty of February 2, 1920, the Soviet Union had renounced all rights over Estonia "for all times." Subsequently, Estonia was recognized as an independent nation by most other countries throughout the world. In September of 1922 Estonia was admitted to the League of Nations.

Estonia sought to bolster her independent status through a "good neighbor" policy—especially toward the U.S.S.R. On February 9, 1929, for example, Estonia joined with Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union in signing an agreement to adhere to the Paris Treaty (Kellogg-Briand Pact of August 27, 1928). According to that treaty, each nation pledged itself to the "renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy." Furthermore, by the Treaty of Non-Aggression and Peaceful Settlement of Disputes between Estonia and the U.S.S.R. (signed in Moscow on May 4, 1932), both nations undertook to "refrain from any act of aggression or any violent measures" directed against each other. Both treaties were supplemented by the Conciliation Convention between Estonia and the Soviet Union (signed June 16, 1932) as well as by a multi-lateral Convention for the Definition of Aggression signed in London on July 3, 1933.

Despite these treaties the Soviet Union posed as much of a threat to Estonia's freedom as if there had not been a single accord. For example, on December 1, 1924, at a time when the Soviet-Estonian Treaty was supposedly in effect, Communist commando troops (assembled in secret) launched a pre-dawn attack against Estonian government installations (military barracks, police stations, government offices, radio and telephone centers). Estonian government troops repulsed the attack but not before much blood had been shed and incalculable damage sustained.

An investigation of the incident revealed the following: (1) The decision and the plans to overthrow Estonia by a coup had been made in the Soviet Union. (2) The Soviet Union had smuggled most of the street fighters and commandos into Estonia. (3) The Soviet Union had provided the weapons used by the raiders.

The investigation also revealed that the leading group of the commandos had counted on receiving help from the rather small Communist party within Estonia. They had also expected help and sympathy from Estonian workers. While the former did provide some assistance, the Estonian workers refused to side with the intruders.

The incident clearly showed Estonians the extent to which the Soviets would go to repossess Estonia. The treaties signed by Estonia and the U.S.S.R. after the raid of 1924 did not indicate a Soviet change in attitude. If anything, they bound the Soviet Union's hands against any overt aggression, i.e. a frontal attack, but did not, as events proved, curb their imperialist appetite.

Adolf Hitler's aggressive moves during the late 1930's provided just the kind of international crisis the Soviets needed for action. During the summer of 1939, France, Great Britain and the Soviet Union were holding talks on ways and means to curb Hitler's sallies. The

Soviets demanded that the U.S.S.R. be given a "guarantee" to extend her power over the Baltic region. Neither Britain nor France would agree, and the negotiations soon collapsed.

Failing to realize her expansionist designs through barter with Great Britain and France, the Soviet Union made a bargain with Germany. On August 23, 1939, Molotov and Ribbentrop signed a non-aggression treaty between the U.S.S.R. and Germany. In a secret protocol of this treaty Estonia, Latvia, part of Lithuania, Finland, and certain areas of Eastern Europe were placed under "Soviet influence."

On the basis of this secret protocol, the Soviet Union summoned special delegations from each of the above nations to Moscow in September of 1939. There Molotov, the presiding Soviet official, forced Estonia to sign a "Mutual Assistance Treaty" with the Soviet Union. The Estonian delegation, which resisted signing the treaty, was warned by Molotov "not to compel the Soviet Union to use force in order to achieve its aims."

Molotov was not bluffing. At the time of the Moscow talks, units of the Soviet Army were being concentrated at the Estonian border with orders to cross it. Only when the "treaty" was signed did Molotov issue orders—in the presence of the Estonian delegation—to halt the movement of Soviet troops. Similar treaties were forced on Latvia and Lithuania. Finland refused to be coerced into such an agreement and was brutally attacked by the Soviet Union in November of 1939. For this aggressive action, the Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations.

Under the terms of the imposed agreement, Estonia was forced to allow the Soviet Union to station 25,000 Soviet soldiers, as well as special air force and naval units in Estonia. The treaty included the following clause: "The present act may in no way impair the sovereign rights of the contracting parties or, especially, their economic system or political structure."

But not even a year since the signing of the treaty had passed when the Soviet Union violated it. On June 16, 1940, the Soviets presented Estonia with an ultimatum, based on unfounded charges, calling for total capitulation. More Soviet troops were brought into Estonia. Within a matter of days the entire nation was completely occupied. Latvia and Lithuania shared the same fate.

But even this total control was not enough for the Soviets. A. Zhdanov, a close friend of former Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin and a member of the Politburo, was sent to Tallinn to stage a Communist "revolution" and to sovietize Estonia.

On the night of June 20, 1940, the Estonian Central Council of Labor Unions Building in Tallinn was taken over by force, the Council's legitimate leaders having been either imprisoned or intimi-

dated into cooperation by Soviet secret police. The building was then turned into a staging ground for the "revolution."

The following day a "demonstration" was held in Tallinn to display the people's "anger" at the "bourgeois government" and to demand its replacement. The crowd at the demonstration consisted of Russians from Soviet army bases, criminals released from prisons, and a handful of Estonian Communists. The crowd's "enthusiasm" was augmented by strategically placed Soviet tanks.

By Soviet standards it was a splendid demonstration. The following day, June 21, 1940, a puppet government—taking orders from Zhdanov—took over. Estonia's hard-earned freedom had come to an end.

4. The Soviet Takeover

To the outside world it may have appeared that each event following this sham revolution, was an act of the people themselves. The puppet government of Estonia declared time and again that it was working for the independence and welfare of the nation. But under the guise of these slogans, the government was rapidly carrying out Zhdanov's orders to put Estonia on the Soviet track.

One of the first acts of the "government" was to seize control of the press and all communications media. All public meetings except those ordered by the regime were prohibited. The Estonian Home Guard, all political parties and patriotic clubs, all educational, social, and even scientific organizations (comprising about 4,000 groups) were ordered to disband. The Estonian army was reorganized and placed under the control of the Red Army. High ranking Estonian government officials were dismissed from their posts and disappeared in N.K.V.D. (Soviet secret police) dungeons.

Yet these acts were only a prelude to an unparalleled international outrage: the Soviet attempts to "legitimize" the annexation of Estonia, as well as Latvia and Lithuania. Let us closely examine the sequence of these attempts.

I. Zhdanov's puppet government ordered that parliamentary elections be held on July 14 and 15 of 1940. Elections, moreover, were to be exempt from judicial review as they had been in the past. Needless to say, this gave the Communists a free hand to tamper with the ballot boxes.

Members of former Estonian political parties, brave enough to place their names on the list of candidates, became the object of intimidation and threats. Most "unofficial" candidates withdrew. Those who persisted were ruled off the ballot list at the last moment by a newly created (Communist) Supreme Elections Com-

mittee. The final slate of candidates consisted only of members of the hastily created (Communist) Estonian Working People's League.

The main issue of the Communist "platform," aside from the usual promises of better economic conditions, was "the preservation of independence for Estonia."

The elections took place in an atmosphere of terror and intimidation. According to the Supreme Elections Committee, 81.6 per cent of the electorate had cast their ballots. Of that total, 92.9 per cent were said to have voted for the Communist slate.

II. On July 21, 1940, the newly elected "parliament" met for its first session. The halls of the parliament buildings were filled with agents of the N.K.V.D. and Soviet soldiers; Soviet tanks were stationed outside.

The parliament adopted four resolutions:

1) On the first day, by unanimous vote (as Communists always do), the delegates renamed Estonia a *Soviet Socialist Republic*.

2) All power in Estonia was relegated to "the working people of town and country" as represented by councils of Working People's Deputies.

3) On the second day, again by unanimous consent, the delegates voted to petition the Soviet Union to admit Estonia into the Soviet Union "as a constituent Republic."

4) On the last day of the session, July 23, 1940, the delegates resolved that "all the land together with natural deposits, all forests, lakes and rivers" of Estonia are public property. In addition, "all banks together with their assets, all large industrial enterprises, mines and means of transportation are [hereby] declared public property, the property of the state."

Needless to say, the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union wasted no time in "complying with the wishes" of the Estonian people. Estonia was "admitted" as a constituent republic of the Soviet Union on August 6, 1940. (Lithuania and Latvia shared the same "privilege" on August 3rd and 5th, respectively.)

These fake elections had thus "sanctified" the puppet parliament as a representative of the Estonian people. Next, all the wealth of the nation was made the property of the Communist state. Finally, the puppet government handed the state (and all its newly acquired possessions) over to the Soviet Union by petitioning to become a "constituent republic"—a part of the Soviet Union.

On July 23, 1940, Konstantin Päts, the President of the Republic, was forced to abdicate. He had not been allowed to resign earlier even though the constitutional government he headed had been destroyed by the "revolution" as a "bourgeois state machine." As

soon as he abdicated, he was arrested and deported to the Soviet Union. His fate is unknown to this day.

Most former civil servants were replaced by Communist appointees. The government business, however, was now carried out by "experts" from the Soviet Union, who occupied mostly the secondary posts of assistants and alternates of the heads of departments, but were the real power behind the scene. Estonians were retained as figure-heads in charge of government offices merely to convey the impression that the nation was governed by Estonians themselves.

From the very onset of the Soviet occupation the N.K.V.D. initiated mass arrests and executions of unwanted elements. The arrests were usually carried out at night—to heighten the sense of terror throughout the nation. Soon all existing prisons were filled to capacity and new ones had to be constructed. Finally, on the night of June 13, 1941, N.K.V.D. soldiers descended on thousands of Estonian homes. According to lists compiled previously in the greatest secrecy, they seized thousands of individuals and families, loaded them into trucks, and took them to "special camps" in Soviet Eastern regions. Husbands were separated from their families and sent to different forced labor camps, unknown to their wives and children.

The order for this mass arrest had been signed by Ivan Serov, Acting People's Commissar for State Security of the U.S.S.R. In his extensive instructions for the operation he cited "expulsion of anti-Soviet elements from the Baltic Republics" as justification for the arrests.

During the German occupation of the country (1941-1944), an Estonian Committee established the identities and the number of the victims of terror under the first Soviet occupation. The Committee's findings are as follows:

- 1) Arrested: 7,926 persons. Of these 1,950 (including 206 women) were later exhumed from mass graves. They had been shot in the neck. The remaining were either sent to the Soviet Union or their graves have not been found in Estonia.
- 2) Deported: 10,205 persons of all ages—half of them women.
- 3) Missing and unaccounted for: 1,101 persons.
- 4) The Soviets drafted 33,304 Estonians into the Red Army. Upon retreat, these men were taken into the Soviet Union. Similarly, the former Estonian Army (consisting of about 5,573 men at this time) was also sent into the Soviet Union. Findings further indicate that 1,858 Estonians had been sent to the Soviet Union as "volunteer workers."

The Committee found that 59,967 Estonians—a majority of them young men and women as well as government leaders and skilled workers—had been lost by Estonia. This number represented roughly

5 per cent of Estonia's total population at that time.

5. A Change of Captors: German Occupation

On June 21, 1941, war broke out between the Soviet Union and Germany. As the German *Blitzkrieg* swung north, the Red Army began retreating out of Estonia into Russia's interior.

While the Soviet troops were moving out, and before the Germans arrived, thousands of young Estonians escaped into the forests. There they formed guerrilla bands to fight for Estonia's independence from the Soviets. In part their efforts were successful. By their presence they curbed the "scorched earth" policy of the retreating Soviets and thus saved considerable property from destruction. But their hope of restoring freedom to Estonia was to be completely thwarted by both the Germans and the Soviets.

The Germans opposed restoration of independence for Estonia. Rather than destroying the police state mechanism the Soviets had created, they kept a large part of it for their own use. Despite this disappointment, however, Estonians continued to regard the Soviet Union as their primary enemy. Near the end of the war thousands of young Estonians even joined special Estonian units in the German army to fight against the Soviets, hoping to regain independence for Estonia.

6. Again the Soviets: 1944

In 1944, a near panic seized the Estonian people, with memories of Soviet terror fresh in their minds, when it became clear that Allied victories in Western Europe would result in Soviet reoccupation of the Baltic area. Nearly 65,000 Estonians seized the initiative by escaping their homeland to take refuge in Sweden or Germany. Many more would have followed them had there been means of escape. Thousands of Estonians perished trying to cross the Baltic Sea in any kind of vessel that would float. Often too many people crowded on board and the boats sank in heavy seas. Some of these escaping crafts were sunk by Soviet submarines and airplanes.

The Baltic people's fears were fully justified. When the German lines moved back the Soviets surged into Estonia with vengeance. On March 6 and 7 of 1944, for example, Soviet artillery and air raids completely destroyed the ancient city of Narva—famous for its medieval architecture and cultural monuments. At the time of the Soviet bombardment, and known to the Soviets, all German troops had left the city. The bombardment was thus a useless act of destruction. Tallinn fared somewhat better than Narva. Only a quarter of that historic city was destroyed by Soviet bombardment on the night of March 9, 1944.

IV.

SOVIETIZATION OF ESTONIA

1. Mass Deportations

DIRECTLY BEHIND the advancing Soviet front lines came the hated N.K.V.D. Once again midnight arrests and murder filled the country with terror. The reign of terror did not cease with the end of the war but continued, culminating in a mass deportation in March of 1949.

For obvious reasons it is impossible to determine the number of victims by this deportation. Eye-witness reports indicate that it was several times more numerous than that of June, 1941. The main aim of the second deportation was to frighten Estonian peasants into joining the kolkhozes (collective farms), which the Soviets were establishing at that time.

While the deportation of 1949 marked the end of mass purges in Estonia, Soviet terror did not end. The following year a campaign was opened to weed out the "bourgeois nationalists." This campaign was directed mainly at Communist party ranks and was paralleled by a similar purge in the Soviet Union at the same time. Many Estonian Communists, including the First Secretary of the Estonian Party, were ousted from their posts and sent to forced labor camps in the Soviet Union.

Since Stalin's death in March, 1953, some of this brutality has been eased. Some of previously deported Estonians, who somehow managed to survive the prison camps, have been pardoned and allowed to return to their native country.

It must be noted, however, that many of the returnees have been pardoned only in a legal sense. The Communist regime in Estonia considers them outcasts and has callously refused to provide many of them with employment and housing. Large numbers of them have been forced to return to the Soviet Union in search of work.

One may ask for the reasons of such brutality. It is one matter to defeat a nation by military force, to pillage its wealth, and to keep it under control, as, for instance, the Nazis did during their occupation. Yet it is another matter to extend brutalities over a period of many years.

The answer is rather simple. Methodic brutality seeks to demoralize all opposition—to bring an entire nation to its knees. Its aim is to destroy that group of Estonians who are the mainstay of national independence and to make the people malleable for ensuing sovietization.

Accordingly, after Estonia had been brought to its “knees” through terror, there remained the task of remodelling the country along Soviet lines.

One of the most heavy-handed methods used to accomplish this task is reflected in Estonia's population statistics. According to a census conducted by the independent Estonian government the population of the country in 1934 was 1,126,413. In January, 1959, the latest Soviet census gave the population of Estonia as 1,197,000 (in full thousands.) Broken down into national origin figures the statistics are as follows:

	<u>1934</u>	<u>1959</u>
Estonians	992,370 (88.1%)	873,000 (73.0%)
Russians	92,656 (8.2%)	260,000 (21.7%)
Others	41,397 (3.7%)	63,000 (5.3%)

The number of Estonians has thus decreased by nearly 120,000 people in the 25 year interval between the two censuses. The reason for this population drop is clear: purges, deportations, murders, and refugees.

At the same time, the number of Russians in Estonia has increased by 167,000. This figure does not include White Russians or Ukrainians. All told, over 240,000 people from the Soviet Union have “migrated” into Estonia.

The effect of such an influx is obvious. The people from the Soviet Union bring with them their own customs, their outlooks, and in most cases, a loyalty to “Mother Russia”—whatever her government. The result is dilution of Estonian nationalism—a classic case of colonialism in action.

2. Attack on Religion

Another phase of the sovietization of Estonia is a concerted Communist effort to wipe out religious worship and “religious prejudices,”

i.e., faith itself. Communist dogma considers any religion an “opiate of the people.”

In independent Estonia, church and state had been separate. The Lutheran Protestant Church, representing the vast majority of Estonians, was headed by an Archbishop and consistory (church council). The minority Greek Orthodox Church was headed by a Metropolitan associated with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople.

On the surface the situation has remained much the same under Soviet rule. The only apparent difference is that the Estonian Greek Orthodox Church is now subordinated to the Moscow Patriarchate and the once renowned Department of Theology at the University of Tartu has been disbanded.

In reality, however, even though the Soviet Constitution decrees separation of church and state, the church in Estonia has been deprived of all freedoms. Religious books of any kind have been eliminated from all libraries and their publication is forbidden. All religious books and periodicals are banned from the mails. Teaching religion to children is punishable under the Criminal Code.

Furthermore, a vigorous anti-religious campaign is led in the Soviet press in which the church and religion are described as “survivals of the past,” detrimental to the cause of communism. A multitude of specially schooled propagandists lecture on the “prejudices of religion” throughout Estonia.

The church and its pastors occupy the lowest rung in the Communist society. Many churches have been closed. Although church attendance is not officially prohibited, no person aspiring to a responsible job can risk attending church. For many people, especially those working in education, visiting a church is tantamount to losing one's job. In 1962, for example, two teachers in South Estonia, who were secretly married in a church, were instantly dismissed when the authorities found out about their “crime”.

In their fight against the church the Communists have introduced secular ceremonies, reminiscent of church ritual. Autumn youth festivals are held at the time of traditional church confirmations. There are civil wedding ceremonies, funerals featuring secular music and speakers, *etc.*

Strong-arm methods were also used against the clergy. During the first Soviet occupation two Lutheran pastors, one Methodist pastor, and five Orthodox priests were executed. Many churchmen were deported to the U.S.S.R. During the second occupation clergy-men were deported in large numbers. In their zeal the Soviets even deported Archbishop Pahn, a man they themselves had appointed.

Many churchmen escaped Estonia before the returning Soviet army. Among them were the heads of the Estonian Lutheran and

Orthodox Churches, 70 Lutheran pastors, and a considerable number of Orthodox priests.

3. Attack on Education

Estonia's educational system became a prime target of sovietization. During Estonia's independence the government sought to make educational facilities available to all. Six years of free elementary education were compulsory. Students could then go on to three years of junior high school. Both the junior high school and the regular high schools were divided into two types—one stressed the sciences, while the other emphasized liberal arts. All schools emphasized responsible, independent thinking and high moral standards.

Because laws permitted each national minority to conduct classes in its native language, many schools taught exclusively in languages other than Estonian.

During the 1939-40 school year a total of 122,000 students were enrolled in 1,346 schools of general education. Teaching and administrative staffs for these schools numbered 4,956. In addition to these general schools, additional 15,032 students were enrolled in 177 vocational schools.

During the same academic year Estonia had about 33 people per 10,000 enrolled at the university level. (The figure in 1926 had been 44 per 10,000 but it had declined because of saturation of Estonian facilities and since many Estonian students were attracted by technical universities in Western Europe.) Even so, the 1939 figure of 33 students per 10,000 compares more than favorably with the 27 per 10,000 in West Germany and 16 per 10,000 in England, in 1957.

The result of independent Estonia's stress on universal education is clearly evident in the following comparison. According to a 1934 census, illiteracy among Estonians over 10 years of age was only 2.1 per cent. Meanwhile, in the Soviet Union illiteracy for the 9 to 49 age group in 1939 was 10.9 per cent.

When the Soviets occupied Estonia, one of their first moves in education was to begin teaching "Marxism-Leninism" in accordance with Communist dogma. Still another change was to "redirect" educational influence from West to East. Independent Estonia was a Western-oriented nation. Western languages were taught as part of the regular school curriculum. The Soviets continue teaching Western languages, but to a much lesser degree. The reasons for teaching English or German now is for the express purpose of enabling students to read Western scientific and technological literature. The teaching of Russian has been immensely expanded.

Since the Soviets stress industrialization at all costs the educational

system has been enlisted to provide technical personnel. The teaching of science and technology has been given priority over the liberal arts.

Aside from these changes in curriculum the Soviets first increased elementary education from the pre-war level of 6 years to 7 years. Later, in the academic year 1962-63, they increased it to 8 years. At the same time, however, the number of years required for a full secondary education has been reduced from 12 to 10 years.

The Soviets also reduced the total number of schools in Estonia. In 1939-40 there were 1,346 schools of general education. By 1959-60 the number of general education and adult education schools had decreased to 1,193. Part of the decrease is readily explained by the fact that about 5 per cent of Estonia's territory was transferred to Soviet Russia. Schools in the severed territory are no longer counted as Estonia's.

The number of students in elementary and secondary schools has increased from 122,000 in 1939-40 to 178,000 in 1959-60. However, if we consider the increase in compulsory education from 6 to 7 years, the increase in population, and the comparatively large number of settlers from the Soviet Union seeking supplementary general education, this increase in the total number of students is rather insignificant.

On the university level there has been a substantial increase in student enrolment under the Soviets. Not counting teacher trainees, the number of students enrolled in Estonian universities in 1939-40 was 3,745. By 1956-57 the number had increased almost threefold to 9,800. This rapid growth is almost entirely due to Soviet regime's demands for industrial and technical talent. This is most apparent in a breakdown of enrolment statistics. In 1939-40, for example, the number of students enrolled in engineering, agriculture, mathematics and natural sciences totaled 912. In 1959-60, with the new stress on industrialization, the number increased to 6,763.

As in most Communist-dominated countries, not only the educational system but the students themselves are closely controlled by the regime. One way of doing this is through the "student report," a dossier on every student enrolled in any school. These reports contain information about each student's participation in Communist youth activities (*Pioneer* or *Komsomol* organizations) and his contribution to work projects during schools vacations. Whenever a student applies for a job he must present his dossier. And, since the employment committee always includes several Party members, the applicant's participation in Communist youth activities is an absolute must if he wants a decent job.

Similar controls are evident in the education law passed on December 24, 1958. The law requires all non-university students to

participate in "work training" for at least two hours a week. In addition, students in the 3-6 grades are required to attend two classes of "socially useful work" each week, while students in grades 5 to 10 now have to perform two weeks of "production practice" every year.

Furthermore, students are required to hold regular full time jobs during the last three years of secondary education and during the first two years of higher education.

Aside from revamping the regular educational system, the Communists have introduced a special kind of control. In 1959 they started a new type of boarding school whose main purpose is to educate children in the "true spirit of communism." From the initial two schools with 600 children, these "boarding schools" have been increased to 15 with a total enrolment of 5,800 students.

In 1960 state expenditure per student in these boarding schools averaged about 700 new rubles. At the same time state expenditure on "regular" schools averaged about 80 new rubles per student. (During 1939-40 the independent Estonian government spent about 78 kroons, roughly 140 new rubles, per student in the general education system.)

4. Attack on Estonian Culture

Political independence brought about a cultural explosion in Estonia. The flowering of Estonian letters was evident in the prose works of Anton Tammsaare, August Malk, Albert Kivikas; in the poetry of Gustav Suits, Henrik Visnapuu and Marie Under; in literary criticism of Freidebert Tuglas, Ants Oras, and in the creations of many others. Some of these writers and poets gained international recognition as their works were translated into other languages.

Most major Estonian cities formed professional theater groups, and Tallinn had several outstanding resident companies with highly competent actors and directors. Virtually every community had an amateur theater group.

In the fine arts Estonia had a well established school of painters and sculptors (August Weizenberg, Johan Kohler, Amandus Adamson) even before she gained independence. When Estonia became free, many disciples of these masters (Ants Laikman, Peet Aren, Paul Burmann, Jaan Kort, etc.) joined and guided the younger generation of painters and sculptors. Within the newly created academies of art virtually all the trends and styles of the 1920's and 1930's were represented.

In architecture, as in painting and sculpture, Estonia had a rich and varied tradition. Fine examples of Romanesque, Gothic, Renais-

sance, Baroque, Classic and modern buildings made the cities of Tallinn, Narva and Tartu open museums of architectural history.

The government of independent Estonia encouraged cultural activity. The Culture Fund Law was enacted in 1925 to lend financial support to the development of the arts. And in 1935 a special pension law was passed for people engaged in the creative arts.

The results of both the natural interest in the arts as well as the openhanded support of such activity by the government is clearly demonstrated by the comparative statistics below:

Number of Literary Works Published

	1924	1934	1937	per 10,000 inhabitants
Estonia	925	1372	1949	17.25
Denmark	3606	2171	3423	9.25
Netherlands	4903	5845	7844	9.25
Norway	1160	1805	2174	7.14
Sweden	3058	2749	2850	4.51

Much of this cultural activity had a strong nationalistic flavor. That is why the Soviets, when they occupied Estonia in 1940, made an immediate effort to curb cultural life and then to redirect it along their lines.

As soon as the Soviets have taken command of the nation all cultural organizations were branded as being "hostile to the people." Literary clubs were allowed to exist only according to Communist directives. In July, 1940, for example, Communist Party orders created the Organizational Committee of the Soviet Estonian Writers' League to replace the original League of Writers.

The press, radio, and theaters were also attacked immediately. On the very first day of the occupation, editors were replaced, publications renamed (to become *The Communist*, *The Bolshevik of Valga*, etc.) and their contents turned into propaganda. Theaters opened their 1940 season with plays prescribed by the Communist regime. Movie theaters, many of which had previously shown films imported from the West, now limited themselves to Soviet productions.

The Soviets compiled lists of "forbidden books" and "purged" them from all public libraries, book stores and stocks of publishing houses. Stocks of several books already printed but not yet on sale were either destroyed or the authors were commanded to change them to comply with Soviet dogma. Control over all publishing

became vested in the Communist-created State Publishing House. (Writers, or any person who had personal contact with the West, were muzzled by heavy censorship of the mails.)

Underlying this concentrated attack on all cultural and related activity was the Communist principle of "socialist realism." According to that principle, the purpose of art is to serve the Communist party, to re-educate the masses, and to present proof that Marxism-Leninism is "the wave of the future." During the latter part of the 1940's the theory of "socialist realism" was coupled with another fictitious theory, namely, that Estonia and the Soviet Union had always been close friends. At the 1947 session of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian S.S.R. it was even maintained that the intensive and reactionary Russification efforts from 1880 to 1890 had been very useful to Estonia.

One of the most tragic chapters of this period was the persecution of the so-called "bourgeois nationalists" in the arts. Accusations levelled at this group—writers, poets, musicians, actors, *etc.*—ranged from chauvinism and cosmopolitanism to formalism, estheticism and naturalism. The final "unmasking" of these individuals took place at the 8th plenary session of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist party in 1950. Those found "guilty" were purged from party ranks and thrown out of artists' unions. This meant that they could no longer make a living as artists. Many were deported to Siberia. A curious twist to these proceedings was that some of those found guilty were Communists or legitimate Communist sympathizers.

After Stalin's death in 1953 some of the purged "bourgeois nationalists" were pardoned. Moreover, there appeared (both within the Soviet Union and Estonia) a general loosening of restrictions on cultural activity. In practice this meant that the prescribed limits of social realism could now be extended. Poetry dealing with political matters was allowed to be published alongside "neutral" poems about nature. Short stories were now permitted to criticize non-political sectors of Soviet life. In theaters and concert halls, more classical works were allowed. Some West European books, not critical of Communist ideology, were allowed to be translated and published.

The Hungarian revolt of 1956 brought a reversal of this liberal trend. At the 10th Congress of the Estonian Communist Party in January 1957, First Secretary I. Kabin, presented the Party's justification of the reversal of cultural "liberalization." "Elements of bourgeois nationalists," Kabin said, "with their shouting about 'Russification' are striving to eliminate from Estonian national culture its socialist content. Such attitudes still exist among some members of the small bourgeois intelligentsia and we cannot concur with this. The co-existence of the two systems does not mean that the

struggle against bourgeois ideology can be considered of secondary importance."

Kabin's statement was not followed by extensive purges of writers. A few editors were fired and others appointed to replace them. Nevertheless the warning was ominous enough to make all Estonian publications adhere to the Party line.

The most recent cultural repression came in March of 1963 when Nikita Khrushchev attacked all schools of arts and letters outside socialist realism. He reiterated the Communist promise that the purpose of all art is to aid the party in building communism and in creating the "new Soviet man."

Such restrictions have done much to demoralize the artistic community in Estonia. They also evoked fierce resistance. In the fall of 1944, when there was an opportunity to escape Soviet oppression, more than half the active members of the Estonian literary community fled to the West. Among them were Marie Under, Gustav Suits, and Henrik Visnapuu—the most prominent writers in Estonia. Numerous scientists, artists and other persons active in the cultural field were also among the refugees. One of the more prominent poets of the younger generation, Heiti Talvik, and the most prominent Estonian playwright, Hugo Raudsepp, died in 1948 in a Soviet jail.

The publication of new works is an important measure of the vitality of cultural life. Let us compare the number of new works published by refugees in the West with those published in Estonia. Refugee literature is supported by 63,000 refugees scattered all over the world and does not enjoy any public support or assistance. A comparison of the number of original works published by the refugees and in occupied Estonia in the years 1944-1959 is shown in the following tables.

Estonian Literary Production

	<i>Published abroad</i>		<i>Published in Estonia</i>	
	<i>Books</i>	<i>Pages</i>	<i>Books</i>	<i>Pages</i>
Novels	114	26,300	25	9,400
Short stories	30	7,200	31	4,470
Memoirs	61	12,910	10	2,600
Poetry	61	4,800	61	5,950
Total	266	51,210	127	22,420

V.

ECONOMY UNDER SOVIET RULE

DURING the Second World War, and the years following it, radical changes have occurred in the Estonian economy under the Soviet regime.

Soviet economic policy in Estonia, as in other occupied countries has centered on the development of industry at the expense of almost all other sectors of economy. In Estonia this meant that a predominantly agricultural economy (60 per cent of the combined industrial and agricultural output provided by farming) has been forced to become a primarily industrial one. Industrial production accounts for 80 per cent of all production in Estonia to-day.

Total production of goods in Estonia has increased almost three times over its pre-war level. Mass production methods introduced by the Soviets have boosted productivity which, in turn, has increased output. At the same time, however, the purchasing power of the average wage (for food, clothing, and footwear) has dropped to about half the pre-war level.

A significant side effect of this industrialization has been a rapid urbanization of Estonia. In 1939 the urban population comprised only 33 per cent of the total population. By 1962, 58 per cent of the total population lived in urban areas.

Let us examine the developments in each major sector of Estonia's economy.

1. Agriculture

In 1939 there were 139,980 farms in Estonia with a total area of 3,179,000 hectares. The average farm consisted of 22.7 hectares or 56 acres of land. Only 442 farms had more than 100 hectares of land.

Pre-war agriculture was characterized by extensive animal husbandry. Estonian farmers not only supplied the domestic market

but were able to export relatively large quantities of first grade butter, bacon and eggs. In fact, exports of agricultural produce made up nearly 40 per cent of all Estonian exports in 1938.

While animal husbandry was extremely efficient the production of grain in Estonia lagged behind. During the 1930's considerable quantities of grain and grain products had to be imported. By 1938, however, domestic production had increased to such a point that imports of grain (including milled products) amounted to little more than 17,000 tons for the year.

The increase in grain production is more or less representative of the entire agricultural economy during the period of Estonian independence. As the table below indicates, it enjoyed continued and vigorous growth during that period.

Table 1

Some Basic Indicators of Estonian Agricultural Development,
1920-1959

	1920	1939	Increase %	1959	Incr. (+) or decrease (-) vs. 1939
Sown area, 1000 ha.	691 ¹⁾	994	44	761	- 23
of that grain	454 ¹⁾	590	30	279	- 53
Grain prod., 1000 tons	477 ²⁾	702	47	353	- 50
Potato prod., 1000 tons	712 ²⁾	879	23	1197	+ 36
Milk	381	988	159	813	- 18
Meat prod., 1000 tons	...	75	...	89	+ 19
Egg prod., mill. pcs.	41 ³⁾	168	310	204	+ 21
Cattle, thousand	465	706	52	486 ³⁾	- 31
of that cows	250	478	91	292 ³⁾	- 39
Pigs, thousand	267	442	66	471 ³⁾	+ 7
Sheep, thousand	551	695	26	275 ³⁾	- 60
Horses, thousand	168	218	30	76 ³⁾	- 65
Tractors, thousand	...	1.8	...	7.4 ³⁾	+311

This free and vigorous development of Estonian agriculture was cut short by the Soviets in 1940. Upon occupying Estonia they first nationalized all farm land and then created state and collective farms. The process of converting individual farms into collectives was long and bitter. Few farmers were willing to give up their land and join the collectives voluntarily. The final effort that accomplished almost

¹⁾ In 1919.

²⁾ Average of 1920-1924.

³⁾ On January 1st, 1960.

total collectivization in the spring of 1949 was preceded by brutal mass deportations of farmers and their families.

During the collectivization drive farmers were compelled to hand over, without compensation, virtually all farm animals and agricultural equipment. They were allowed to keep one cow, two pigs, some sheep, poultry and garden tools. Once they became members of the kolkhozes (collective farms) and did full time work they were entitled to 0.6 hectares of land for private use. (These are the famous "garden plots" that are responsible for most of the green vegetables reaching the cities as well as for countless headaches for kolkhoz managers. Workers have been known to work at half speed all day long on the collectively held land and then to rush home and to work full speed on their garden plots.)

Theoretically, all collectivized animals and equipment that had been taken into the collectives still belonged to those farmers who remained in the collective. But if the collectives were turned into, or attached to existing state farms, then these animals and equipment automatically became state property. When this type of conversion takes place, no compensation is paid to members of the collectives. These members, of course, are the original owners of the property.

The practice of converting collectives into state farms is now widespread in Estonia. In 1949, for example, there were 2,898 small collective farms. In 1953, only 914 collectives (with 762,300 hectares of sown area) remained, while 108 state farms (with 47,300 hectares of sown land) had been created. By 1959 the collective farm sown area dropped to 503,000 hectares while the state farm share rose to 176,000 hectares. (Total sown area, including privately cultivated garden plots, decreased from 886,000 hectares in 1953 to 761,000 hectares in 1959.) By the end of 1960 the number of collectives had decreased to 648.

According to Soviet statements, this conversion from private to collective farms and, subsequently, to state farms was to increase production and improve agriculture. Nothing of the sort has happened. If anything, as Table 1 on page 34 indicates, there has been an outright regression in agricultural output.

Part of the blame for this decline can be placed on the Soviet system of collectivism. Farmers accustomed to working their own land have little incentive to work equally as hard on land they no longer own. On the other hand, even if the system were acceptable to the farmers, Soviet state planning has deliberately overlooked the needs of the agrarian economy in favor of rapid industrial development.

In 1939, for example, there were about 218,000 horses on Estonian farms. By 1959 this number had decreased to 76,000. At the same time the number of available tractors has increased from 1,800 in

1939 to 7,400 in 1959. If we divide the decrease in the number of horses by the increase in the number of tractors (5,600) we find that one tractor has replaced every 25 horses.

One might note that in the U.S. one tractor has replaced every 2.0 horses or mules (in 1941-1959). In Denmark the ratio is one tractor for every 4.4 horses.

If one assumes the working capacity of one tractor to be equal to 8 working horses (working horses constitute, on the average, 78 per cent of the total number of horses) one finds that power for field work has decreased in Estonia by 36 per cent in the 20 years from 1939 to 1959.

The negative effect of state planning and the lack of initiative on the part of the farmers, forced into collectives and state farms, need not be compared against Western standards of agricultural production. According to Soviet data, for example, about 60,000 hectares (3 per cent of all agricultural land or 8 per cent of sown area) was still in private hands in 1959. Tillers of this land accounted for 47 per cent of the total potato crop, 54 per cent of the meat production, 47 per cent of all milk production, and 71 per cent of all egg production for that year.

Table 2

Production of Milk, Meat, Potatoes and Eggs,
by Categories of Farms in 1959

Farms	Potatoes		Milk		Meat		Eggs	
	1000 t.	%	1000 t.	%	1000 t.	%	mill.	%
Sovkhozes	170	14.2	120	14.7	14.5	16.3	14.7	7.2
Other state farms	21	1.7	11	1.4	1.7	1.9	3.8	1.9
Kolkhozes	439	36.7	299	36.8	25.1	28.2	40.8	20.0
Private plots	567	47.4	383	47.1	47.7	53.6	144.7	70.9
Total	1197	100.0	813	100.0	89.0	100.0	204.0	100.0

Within the past few years the output of grain, potatoes, and milk has somewhat increased. Production of meat, on the other hand, decreased considerably in 1962. In general, the agrarian economy of Estonia is in a stalemate and it may very well remain so unless adequate machinery, equipment, fertilizers and other aids are provided by state planners.

2. Industry

When independent Estonia and the U.S.S.R. concluded the peace treaty of 1920 it appeared that the two nations were about to enter a period of tranquility and neighborliness. Accordingly, Estonia

envisioned that her colossal eastern neighbor would become a market for Estonian goods.

These hopes were in vain. The Soviet Union simply refused to buy anything Estonian industries produced.

As a result Estonia was compelled to reorganize her industrial complex, create new industries, and find outlets for them in the Western world. By the middle 1920's many industries were successfully converted to make new products for new markets. Three shipyards and a railway car factory had to be dismantled for lack of business.

As in most countries, over-all industrial production declined in Estonia during the world wide depression of the early 1930's. In spite of this, Estonian industry registered growth. The industrial index for factories employing 20 or more workers rose 97 per cent in the ten year span from 1928 to 1938. Productivity among workers in this category rose 26 per cent and real wages increased 27.7 per cent.

Moreover, it was during this period that Estonia succeeded in establishing an oil shale industry. After many years of experimenting, the process of distilling oil from oil shale was sufficiently perfected during the early 1930's to make oil shale mining economically attractive. By 1939, nearly 1,653,000 tons of oil shale were mined and some 170,000 tons of oil extracted from it.

During the late 1930's overall industrial growth began to accelerate. By 1937, a variety of industries, which now relied heavily on Western European and domestic markets, provided full time employment for over 82,500 workers.

By the time of the Soviet invasion, Estonia had a sound, though modest, industrial complex. The German invasion and subsequent retreat did little damage to the productive capacity of the nation. Some oil shale mines and textile manufacturing plants were damaged, but on the whole the Soviets captured a relatively intact industrial capacity when they invaded Estonia for the second time in 1944.

Using this industrial base as a springboard the Soviets began an intensive drive to increase production. According to their own data, total industrial output in Estonia increased 10.3 times from 1940 to 1959. The released growth statistics for 1940, 1960 and 1961 (15 per cent, 12 per cent and 10.4 per cent, respectively) alleged that the 1961 industrial production in Estonia surpassed the 1939 level by 14.6 times.

This is not entirely true. The Soviet method of accounting—adding the output of individual industrial plants and showing “gross industrial production,” distorts the actual output levels. If, however, one computes the net output at comparable prices for the same period one finds that industrial production has not grown 14.6 times but about six times.

Increasing production six times is still a considerable achievement. How was it done? We have already mentioned that agriculture was completely ignored in favor of expanding industry. Similarly, up to 1957, little or no funds were spent on residential housing. The unused capital from these sectors of the economy was siphoned off into industry.

Moreover, before the war most of Estonian industry operated on a one shift a day basis. When the Soviets took over they began running plants with two shifts—thereby doubling production. Skilled workers from the U.S.S.R. proper were attracted by stories of better working conditions and higher living standards in Estonia. Also, when the big push to collectivize the farms was put in effect, thousands of farmers moved into the cities. With this increase in manpower, plus injected capital, industry had no choice but to grow.

The table below, computed in physical volume of industrial production, charts the course of industrial development under the Soviets.

Table 3

Output of Some Industrial Goods in Estonia
in 1939, 1959 and 1961, Physical Volume and Indices (1939=100)

	1939	1959		1961	
	Volume	Volume	Ind.	Volume	Ind.
Electric energy, mill. kwh	183	1267a)	692	3150a)	1721
Oil shale, 1000 t.	1653	9091	550	10300	624
Oil shale gas, mill. m ³	—	413	c	445	c
Cement, 1000 t.	73	98	134	314	430
Glass, 1000 m ²	1036	1800	174	1800	174
Cellulose, 1000 t.	102	88	86	103	101
Paper, 1000 t.	20	89	445	94	470
Cotton fabrics, mill. m.	20	117b)	585	122b)	610
Linen fabrics, 1000 m.	1509	8162	541	8927	592
Wool fabrics, 1000 m.	1295	3337	258	3577	276
Butter, 1000 t.	16.9	15.6	92	15.6	92
Beer, mill. decal.	1.18	2.7	229	3.3	280
Electric motors up to 100 kw., 1000 pcs.	2	200	100 t.	226	113 t.
Excavators, pcs.	—	470	c	600	c
Road graders,	—	301	c	352	c
Power transformers, 1000 kVa	—	—	c	1802	c

a) Without the output of the Narva Hydroelectric station of about 600 mill. kwh which was entirely directed to the Soviet Union.

b) Finished cotton fabrics; the total output of cotton fabrics in 1958 was 157.5 mill. m.; in 1959 and 1961 the estimated outputs were 164 and 170 mill. m. respectively.

c) New production.

Some of the highlights of this enforced development include:

1. *Electrical energy.* The highest rate of growth took place in this sector of the economy. In addition to the already existing power plants at Tallinn, Pussi and Ellamaa the Soviets constructed large plants in Kohtla-Järve and Ahtme with a total output of about 1,000,000,000 kwh. The still unfinished Baltic Electric Station at Soldino near Narva—which will also use oil shale for fuel—is expected to have a capacity of 1,625,000 kwh by 1965. Although a large amount of electricity produced in Estonia is siphoned into the Soviet Union, total production in this sector is impressive. Estonia will be producing over 7,000 kwh *per capita* in 1966. By contrast, the *per capita* output of electricity in West Germany in 1961 was 2,260 kwh.

2. *Oil Shale Mining.* As it was already noted, oil shale mining became economically possible through improved methods of extraction. The Soviets capitalized heavily on this improvement. In 1939, 1,700,000 tons of oil shale were mined. By 1961, the figure had jumped to 10,300,000 tons. Estonia's oil shale reserves are estimated at between 8.6 to 10.5 billion tons. However, unless all side products of distillation are used in subsidiary chemical industries, it may not be economical to continue oil shale mining for oil and gas distillation, but only for fuel in power plants.

3. *Machine tool and metal working industries.* Since Estonia lacks raw materials, Soviet plans usually stress production of tools and machines that have a low metal and high labor content. As a result of this policy, Estonia now has a highly developed technical industry. Electrical motors are the prime example. In 1961, Estonia made 11.2 per cent of all 100 kw or less electrical motors in the Soviet Union. In the 100 kw plus category Estonia produced 8 per cent of the total output in the U.S.S.R.

4. *Consumer goods.* This sector of the economy has lagged behind others. Unlike the machine tool and machinery industry which in 1959-1961 had a reported growth of 22 per cent annually, or the building materials industry (16 per cent annually), consumer goods production has been increasing at the slow rate of 4 per cent per year.

But even at this slow pace of growth Estonia leads the Soviet Union in *per capita* output of consumer goods. In the cotton fabrics industry, for example, Estonia produced nearly 88.2 meters of cloth for every Estonian in 1961, while comparable figures in the U.S.S.R. were 22.6 meters per person. Footwear production in the same year was nearly double the *per capita* output in the Soviet Union. Similarly, in the food industry Estonia produced nearly 43.2 kg of meat *per capita* in 1961. In the Soviet Union the output was only 19.7 kg *per capita* in the same year.

Because of the unified wage system, however, Estonians have not been able to enjoy the fruits of their high productivity. Most of the output is exported to the Soviet Union proper. In 1956, for example, Estonia produced 137,000,000 meters of cotton fabrics. Of that amount, 131,400,000 meters were exported to and only 17,600,000 meters imported from the Soviet Union. Similar examples exist in other Estonian industries. A considerable amount is produced but little of it remains because the population cannot afford to purchase it.

3. The Real Income

Ultimately most questions of economics must be dealt with in terms of real income to the population. For no matter what statistics show the production to be, the individual within that society is no better off than what he can purchase with the funds he earns.

Contrary to the practice in independent Estonia, the Soviet regime does not publish wage and price statistics. In spite of this, a rough comparison of real income is possible if we glean information from related Soviet economic data.

In 1939, the average wage of employees in industrial enterprises having more than 5 workers was 80.75 *kroons* a month. If the employee had one dependent he (or she) was exempt from paying income taxes. The employee did pay (on an equal basis with his employer) a 2 per cent contribution toward health insurance. The average direct wage, thus, was 79.13 *kroons* a month.

As a citizen and a wage earner the employee received the following monthly benefits in addition to his wages. (The years in brackets are those for which the respective benefits have been calculated.)

- 1) State expenditure on general education: 1.23 *kroons* (1939-1940).
- 2) Work accident benefits: .76 *kroons* (1935).
- 3) Insurance fund for sickness, pregnancy or death: 3.71 *kroons* (1938).
- 4) State expenditure on social security and welfare: 2.85 *kroons* (1938-1939).

These sums were contributed by the state or the employer. If we add all the above (totalling 8.55 *kroons*) to the wage of 79.13 *kroons*, we find that the average worker had an income of 87.68 *kroons* a month.

In 1957, the Soviets published income data for 13 large and comprehensive groups of wage earners in Estonia. Computations based on this data indicate that the average monthly wage in Estonia in 1955 was 70.72 new rubles. An analysis of other Soviet data shows that during the following four years the average wages

increased by about 3.9 per cent. In 1959 the average income stood at 73.48 new rubles.

Since a worker with a wife and one child pays 5.15 rubles in income tax and union dues, the average net income was thus 68.33 rubles per month. (Belonging to a labor union in Soviet Estonia is not a matter of choice — employment is contingent on union membership.)

According to 1959 data the average Soviet wage earner was entitled to the following state benefits (as a per cent of gross income):

1. General education: 2.78 per cent.
2. Social security and welfare: 8.77 per cent.
3. Medical care: 5.01 per cent.

The total amounts to 16.56 per cent of a worker's gross income. An analysis of these state expenditures indicates, however, that only about 11 per cent were actually benefitting the workers.

In terms of money these benefits amount to 8.08 rubles per month. Adding this amount to the average income one finds that the income of the average worker in Estonia in 1959—both direct and indirect—was 76.41 rubles a month.

By comparing consumer costs of 20 major food prices (bread, milk, butter, etc.) in 1939 and 1959, and of clothing and footwear prices, we find that the purchasing power of one 1939 *kroon* is equal to the purchasing power of 1.78 new rubles.

If one divides the average work wage of 76.41 rubles by the derived value of the *kroon*, one finds that the average work wage in 1959 is worth only 42.93 1939 *kroons*. In other words, the purchasing power of the average worker was roughly 51 per cent less in 1959 than it was in 1939.

A favorite Soviet statistical trick (used not only in Estonia but in all Soviet-dominated countries) is to point out that housing costs have been reduced under the Soviets. Yet even this is a false claim if one examines statistics.

In 1939, industrial workers whose income fell in the 76 to 100 *kroons* range spent about 12 per cent of their income on housing. This is an average figure that includes rents, water taxes and renovation costs. At that time there were about 1.1 to 1.2 persons per room.

In 1959, according to Soviet sources, there were about 6.1 to 6.6 square meters of "living space" for each Estonian, roughly equivalent to 2½ persons per room. During that year the average Estonian family of four occupying 26 sq. meters of living space paid 3.48 rubles basic rent per month. If the house they lived in was less than 22 years old they paid an additional 15 per cent of basic rent. If the house had a bathroom (private or communal) the family paid another 8 per cent surcharge. If the building had

central heating there was still another 5 per cent increase, in addition to the actual heating costs.

If one disregards the additional expenses charged for central heating, the average rent comes to 5.89 rubles a month. In other terms it amounts to 8 per cent of the average monthly income of 76.83 rubles. Admittedly, this is lower than the 12 per cent for the 1939 period. On the other hand, the space the 8 per cent of wages bought the family in 1959 is much less than the amount the 12 per cent bought in 1939. In fact, it is safe to say that if we consider the *per capita* housing space, housing costs more under the Soviets than it did in independent Estonia.

Since 1959, our year of comparison, there has been little improvement in living standards. In 1960, for example, no wage changes were made public. On the other hand, a work increase was announced. In 1961, a 3 per cent wage increase was introduced and, according to official Soviet information, the prices of food on kolkhoz markets in Estonia dropped by 10 per cent.

In 1962, on the other hand, there was an official price increase of 25 to 30 per cent on meat, butter, milk and eggs in the Soviet Union. This mammoth jump in basic foods prices had the effect of forcing all food prices up about 7 per cent. The result: a cancellation of the modest gains in real income of the preceding years.

4. Distribution of the Social Product

Even though output has not increased as much as the Soviets claim, it did rise substantially. The same can be said for the productivity of individual workers. The actual purchasing power and the consequent level of consumption per individual, on the other hand, has dropped to about half the pre-war level. How, or where, did the increased production disappear?

Theoretically, the answer should be given in the Estonian S.S.R. financial statistics. Since the Estonian S.S.R., however, is now considered part of the Soviet Union proper, data on Estonia is basically lumped together with that for the U.S.S.R. As a result, it is impossible to determine directly either the source of certain funds or how these funds are eventually used. Taxes collected in Estonia, for example, are placed into the Soviet Union's treasury.

While the usual indices are not available, analysis is still possible. By examining individual state budgets, for instance, one gets an idea of how much money is available for Estonia and where some of it goes. Thus, according to official Soviet data, revenue for the 1960 Estonian budget amounted to 302,700,000 new rubles. State expenditures in Estonia that year reached 296,700,000 rubles,

144,300,000 of which amount was earmarked for economic development.

Total revenue supplied by Estonia's economy to the treasury of the Soviet Union in the same year was considerably higher. Estonia's "contribution" consisted of more than tax revenue, either direct or indirect. The Communist regime "owns" all enterprises within the state. Hence "profits" derived from state industries, railroads, stores, restaurants, and so on, must also be counted as "revenue." If one includes such revenues for 1960, Estonia's "income" was not the officially cited 302,700,000 rubles, but somewhere in the vicinity of 726,000,000 rubles.

Yet even this is not a complete picture. When a collective farm is transformed into a state farm, for example, all property of the collective farm becomes state property. Therefore all kolkhoz investments must also be considered as state income. In 1960, such investments totalled 20,000,000 rubles. If one adds this additional amount to the 726,000,000 rubles from taxes on state-owned enterprises, one finds that total revenue collected in Estonia in 1960 amounted to 746,000,000 new rubles.

During 1960 the Soviet regime made the following expenditures in Estonia:

1. 226,000,000 rubles were spent on capital investment. This includes 45,000,000 rubles for the Baltic Thermoelectric plant, 20,000,000 rubles for investment in collective farms, and other investments not included in the Estonian State budget.

2. For unspecified projects in the national economy of Estonia: 91,000,000 rubles.

3. Non-economic ventures: development of socio-cultural activities, propaganda agencies, administration costs of rest camps, etc., as well as administration costs of government: 137,900,000 rubles.

The total amount is 456,000,000 new rubles. (The amount quoted earlier, 296,700,000 rubles, did not include direct investments by individual enterprises). If one subtracts total expenditures from our calculated total income, one finds that 290,000,000 more rubles were collected than spent. This sum was not returned to Estonia but remained in the Soviet Union's treasury.

Gross personal income for the 453,000 Estonian wage and salary earners was considerably lower than the amount of revenue collected by the state. Before income taxes and union assessments the gross income of Estonian wage earners totalled 399,000,000 rubles. Other income (wages of collective farm workers, income from garden plots, etc.) brought in an additional 105,000,000 rubles. Thus the total gross income for the entire population of Estonia in 1960 was 504,000,000 rubles.

In a 1959 study published by the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Com-

mittee, *Comparison of the United States and Soviet Economics*, it was pointed out that the purchasing power of the ruble could not be compared uniformly to that of the U.S. dollar. In 1960 one U.S. dollar was worth about 1.37 new rubles if rubles were used to buy consumer goods. In the case of investments the dollar could be valued at .63 rubles. And, for military expenditures, the dollar was worth about .45 rubles.

By using these relative values of the ruble's purchasing power one can arrive at the dollar value of Estonia's gross personal income. At the rate of 1.37 rubles to one dollar, Estonia's 1960 gross personal income of 504,000,000 rubles is worth 368,000,000 U.S. dollars.

If one converts the 226,000,000 rubles spent on capital investment in Estonia that year (at the investment value of the ruble to the dollar, \$1.00=.63 rubles), the amount is \$358,700,000.

From 1958 to 1960, the annual gross personal income in the United States averaged \$355,000,000,000. At the same time \$67,100,000,000 yearly were spent on capital investment—or 18.9 per cent of the personal income. The same percentage of total gross income to Estonians would have amounted to \$69,500,000, in capital investments. Yet we know that the figure was not \$69,500,000 but \$358,700,000. It is quite clear that the differential between these two amounts, \$289,200,000, was not invested for the benefit of the people of Estonia but in the direct interests of increasing the state power. Were this not the case, Estonians would now enjoy a much higher standard of living than they do.

But this is not the end of the story. Apart from military expenses there are few figures to account for the 290,000,000 rubles transferred to the so-called Union budget of the Soviet Union. A comparison between retail sales' figures for Estonia and those for the entire Soviet Union enables one to obtain a rough ratio of what Estonia's share should be in contributions to the total military budget.

The 1960 budget of the Soviet Union called for 9,610,000,000 rubles in military expenditures. (It is doubtful that this figure is correct. U.S. experts estimate that Soviet expenditures for military purposes for that year were nearly double the official figures.) Even if one uses the official figure, Estonia's forced contribution to the military budget amounted to about 77,600,000 rubles. Converted into U.S. dollars at the purchasing power for military products (\$1.00=.45 rubles) the amount was \$172,400,000.

If one subtracts the 77,600,000 rubles for military expenditures from the 290,000,000 that went to the All-Union budget, 212,400,000 rubles remain unaccounted for. This amount includes hidden military and excessive capital expenditures. By converting this sum into dollars at the investment value of the ruble (0.63), one finds that

at this rate Estonia contributed \$337,200,000 to the Soviet Union's budget—a sum neither accounted for, nor returned.

This means that in 1960 \$289,200,000 were spent on increasing the power of the Soviet regime in Estonia. It also means that \$172,400,000 of Estonian funds were spent on bolstering the Soviet military might, and another \$337,200,000 were transferred to the Soviet Union without compensation or explanation. All told, a sum of nearly \$800,000,000, or \$660 per man, woman, and child in Estonia—was literally expropriated from the population.

At the same time the gross income of the entire population of Estonia was \$368,000,000—or \$304 *per capita*.

5. Conclusion

In retrospect, the Soviet claim to having increased industrial production in Estonia is more or less justified. While the increase is not as phenomenal as they claim, it is nonetheless substantial. Yet it would be erroneous to assume that this has been due to the Soviet system. As we have already noted the Soviets captured a well-established industrial base from free Estonia. By running double shifts, by bringing more people into urban areas, by increasing work quotas, by reducing consumption and neglecting housing and agriculture, they succeeded in boosting industrial production and turning in impressive industrial growth figures.

But in this very success Estonia stands as a glaring example of Communist failure. For these economic accomplishments—the area in which the Communists wish to compete with the free world—have been disastrous to the people of Estonia. Even if one disregards the ignominy of being forced to live under a foreign power, the Estonian people are materially worse off now than they were 25 years ago.

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